

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 16-19 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 18 are allowed. With this reply, claims 2-11, 18, and 19 remain pending and claim 1 is canceled. Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Melissaris et al. (*Eur. Polymer J.* 25:455-460, 1989; hereafter “Melissaris”) in view of Seltzer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,729,448; hereafter “Seltzer”), Mizushima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,756,649; hereafter “Mizushima”), and Kataoka et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0188653; hereafter “Kataoka”). Claims 1 and 3-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawamonzen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,316,170; hereafter “Kawamonzen”) in view of Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka. Claims 1 and 3-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Machida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,159,654; hereafter “Machida”) in view of Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka.

Applicants note that the Office has listed claim 19 as rejected on page 1 of the Office Action. As the Office has not provided a basis for the rejection of claim 19, Applicants submit that claim 19 should also be allowed.

Applicants address each rejection below.

Claim Amendments

Applicants note that the claim amendments filed in this application on November 25, 2008 were not entered. Applicants have therefore amended the claims previously filed with the Reply to Office Action on August 13, 2008.

With this Reply, claim 1 has been canceled and claim 3 has been amended to remove its dependency from claim 1.

No new matter has been added by the present amendment. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any canceled subject matter in this or in a continuing application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Melissaris in view of Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka. Claims 1 and 3-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawamonzen in view of Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka. Claims 1 and 3-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Machida in view of Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka.

Applicants have canceled claim 1 and therefore, the rejections as applied to claim 1 are moot. Claim 3 has been amended to depend only from claim 2. In view of the amendment of claim 3, claims 3-11, 18, and 19 depend from claim 2 and therefore, also incorporate the limitations of claim 2.

Previous claim 2 is nonobvious in view of the combinations of Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka; Kawamonzen, Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka; and Machida, Melissaris, Seltzer, Mizushima, and Kataoka. The nonobviousness of the subject matter of previous claim 2 is acknowledged by the Office, as previous claims 2, 18, and 19 were not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over any combination of the cited prior art. As amended dependent claims 3-11 are now dependent solely from claim 2, and therefore include the nonobvious limitations of claim 2. In view of the amendments to the claims, Applicants request that the rejections for obviousness be withdrawn.

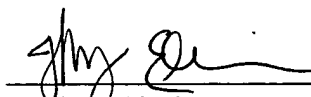
CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for acceptance and such action is hereby respectfully requested.

If there are any charges or any credits, please apply them to Deposit Account No. 03-2095.

Respectfully submitted,

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